

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 MONTRE 00223 101410Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-08
TRSE-00 COME-00 /077 W
-----101451Z 124693 /40

R 092210Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8574
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS MONTREAL 223

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: EFFECT OF PREMIER LEVESQUE'S PERSONAL PROBLEMS ON PUBLIC
IMAGE

1. PREMIER RENE LEVESQUE YESTERDAY MADE FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE
SINCE INVOLVEMENT IN FATAL ACCIDENT OVER WEEKEND. HE PREFACED HIS
SPEECH TO MONTREAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WITH REFERENCE TO ACCIDENT,
APOLOGIZING FOR PROBABLE BREVITY OF HIS REMARKS DUE TO BEING
STILL IN A STATE OF SHOCK, THEN SPOKE APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR
SAYING NOTHING NEW.

2. ACCIDENT OCCURRED AT 4:15 AM SUNDAY WHEN PREMIER WAS DRIVING
HIS SECRETARY HOME AFTER A VISIT WITH FRIENDS. HIS CAR STRUCK A
MAN LYING IN THE STREET AND CARRIED VICTIM ABOUT 140 FEET BEFORE
CAR STOPPED ON SLIPPERY ROAD. AUTOPSY ATTRIBUTED DEATH TO BEING
STRUCK BY CAR.

3. CORONER HAS NOT YET DECIDED WHETHER CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT
FORMAL OR INFORMAL ENQUIRY, LET ALONE CHARGES. LE DEVOIR'S
CLAUDE RYAN HAS CALLED EDITORIALY FOR INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY, BY A
JUDGE, UNDER DIRECTION OF MIN. JUSTICE, AS MECHANISM PROTECT BOTH
PREMIER AND CORONER FROM WHITEWASH ISSUE. PRINCIPAL OTHER
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REACTION TO DATE IS EMPHASIS THAT, AS PREMIER, LEVESQUE NOT
REALLY ENTITLED THE DEGREE OF PRIVATE LIFE HE PREFERS AND THAT
CHAUFFEUR A NECESSITY.

4. REACTION AT CHAMBER WAS SYMPATHETIC. LEVESQUE KNOWN AS
COMPASSIONATE MAN AND IS CLEARLY STILL BADLY SHAKEN. RECEIVED
STANDING OVATION FROM OVERFLOW CROWD BEFORE SPEECH. REACTION TO

SPEECH ITSELF DISTINCTLY MUTED; SOME TEN TO FIFTEEN PERCENT, AT MOST, ROSE TO APPLAUD.

5. THUS, TO DATE, ACCIDENT HAS APPARENTLY CAUSED LITTLE OR NO POLITICAL DAMAGE. ON OTHER HAND, INCREASING NUMBER OF DISCREPANCIES IN WITNESSES' STORIES MAY KEEP STORY ON FRONT PAGES, INCREASE SKEPTICISM ABOUT POLICE DECISION NOT TAKE BREATHALYZER TEST BECAUSE LEVESQUE "SEEMED NORMAL," AND GIVE RYAN RECOMMENDATION EXTRA IMPETUS.

6. PRESS GAVE SPEECH LITTLE NEWS COVERAGE AS THERE WAS NO REAL NEWSWORTHY MEAT IN REPETITION OF GOALS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT, IMPROVED SOCIAL CLIMATE, IMPROVED ECONOMY AND ADMISSION (OR COMPLAINT) THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CONTROL ALL THE LEVERS FOR AMELIORATING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. INDEPENDENCE WAS NOT MENTIONED DIRECTLY AND ONLY INDIRECT REFERENCE WAS THAT "SHIP OF STATE OF QUEBEC NO LONGER NEEDS 110 YEAR-OLD TUGBOAT" TO GET TO DESTINATION. SEVERAL BUSINESSMEN TOLD CG THEY "WISHED HE HAD GIVEN THAT (UNDERSCORED) SPEECH IN NEW YORK". EDITORIAL REACTION LE DEVOIR STRESSES FACT LEVESQUE HAS NEVER BEFORE EXPECTED MIRACLES FROM OTTAWA AND FOUND IRONY IN HIS PRESENT PLAINT. LA PRESSE EDITORIALIZES SPEECH WAS CALL FOR COOPERATION FROM ALL ELEMENTS QUEBEC SOCIETY TO ACHIEVE GOALS AND RESPONSE THERETO STILL UNCERTAIN.
HARPER

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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